

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8276

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SPOP
SUBJ: POPULATION INFORMATION

REF: STATE 167895

THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES ARE KEYED TO PARAGRAPHS OF REF A.

1. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION. ESTIMATED POPULATION NOVEMBER
1976 WAS 38.228 MILLION (PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS, 1976 CENSUS; MID-
YEAR DATA NOT AVAILABLE).

BIRTH RATE	DEATH RATE
1975 37.7	12.2& (CAPMAS)
1975 39.4	13.0&& (PFPB)

& CAPMAS- CENTRAL AGENCY FOR PUBLIC MOBILIZATION AND STATISTICS
&& PFPB - POPULATION AND FAMILY PLANNING BOARD, SAMPLE SURVEYS.
1976 BIRTH AND DEATH RATES HAVE NOT YET BEEN ANALYZED.

2. POPULATION PROGRAMS.

1. AIN 1973, A NEW POPULATION POLICY WAS ISSUED BY THE SUPREME
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COUNCIL WHICH DETERMINED SPECIFIC TARGETS FOR THE 10 YEAR PLAN;

(1) - TO INDUCE THE RATE OF POPULATION GROWTH (BIRTH RATE) 33.7
FROM PER 1000 IN 1973 TO 23.6 IN 1982.

(3) - TO KEEP THE DEATH RATE FROM RISING OVER 13 PER 1000.

(4) - REACHING THE POPULATION SIZE IN GOE OF 41 MILLION BY 1982 AND MANIPULATING THE POPULATION DISTRIBUTION FROM 42 PERCENT URBAN AND 58 PERCENT RURAL IN 1970 TO 47 PERCENT URBAN AND 53 PERCENT RURAL IN 1982.
THE POLICY SPECIFIED FURTHER:

(1) - THE BIRTH RATE SHOULD DECLINE 1 PER 1000 PER YEAR.

(2) - THE MARITAL FERTILITY RATE SHOULD DECLINE FROM 236 PER 1000 IN 1972 TO 160 PER 1000 IN 1982, I.E., AN ANNUAL DECLINE OF 7.6 PER THOUSAND.
IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THESE DEFINED AND AMBITIOUS GOALS, THE POLICY IDENTIFIED NINE FACTORS:

(1) - RAISING THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF THE FAMILY

(2) - EDUCATION

(3) - EMPLOYMENT OF WOMAN

(4) - MECHANIZATION OF AGRICULTURE

(5) - INDUSTRIALIZATION OF COUNTRYSIDE

(6) - REDUCTION OF INFANT MORTALITY

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(7) - SOCIAL SECURITY

(8) - INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

(9) - SPECIFIC SERVICES INCLUDING FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES.

B. COMMENTS ON POPULATION PROGRAM: SINCE 1973, THE RATE OF NATURAL INCREASE APPEARS TO BE RISING, WHETHER AS A RESULT OF AMBIVALENCE IN IMPLEMENTING POLICY (SEE BELOW), AS A RESULT OF A BREAKDOWN IN THE SERVICES DELIVERED BY THE MOH OR DUE TO UNDERLYING SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES.

(1) LEADERSHIP: THERE HAS BEEN A CONCERTED EFFORT SINCE 1973 BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE POPULATION AND FAMILY PLANNING BOARD, DR. AZIZ BINDARY, TO EMPHASIZE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC "CHANGE" (DEVELOPMENT) VS. FAMILY PLANNING AS THE ROUTE TO ACHIEVE FERTILITY REDUCTION. THE APPROACH WAS APPARENTLY ELECTED BECAUSE OF DISSATISFACTION WITH THE "TRADITIONAL" FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM INSTITUTED IN 1966. ALTHOUGH BINDARY'S LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN CHALLENGED RECENTLY BY A DIRECT

ATTACK UPON HIM BY GENERAL GAMAL ASKAR, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL ORGANIZATION FOR PUBLIC MOBILIZATION AND STATISTICS (CAPMAS), HE REMAINS AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE BOARD AND HIS APPROACH APPEARS TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO GOVERNMENT. WHILE MADAME SADAT HAS SPOKEN PUBLICLY IN FAVOR OF FAMILY PLANNING, AND HAS PRIVATELY GONE SO FAR AS TO URGE PENALTY MEASURES AGAINST PARENTS WITH MORE THAN TWO CHILDREN, THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN MUCH MORE CAUTIOUS. HE RECOGNIZES POPULATION PROBLEM IN EGYPT NEEDS SOME REMEDIAL ACTION, BUT IS ALSO VERY AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL POLITICAL VOLATILITY, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE CONSERVATIVE MUSLIM RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY, OF ANY ACTIVE BIRTH CONTROL PROGRAM. THUS, HE HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MADE NO VIGOROUS OR SUSTAINED PUBLIC UTTERANCE IN FAVOR OF BIRTH CONTROL, BUT PREFERS TO WORK ON THE BASIS OF SLOWER, LESS EFFECTIVE FAMILY PLANNING CONCEPTS OF A TYPE SANCTIONED BY THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS (THE ULEMA). THIS SAME POLITICAL SENSITIVITY PERVADES THINKING OF HIGHER LEVELS OF EGYPTIAN BUREAUCRACY WITH RESULT THAT NEITHER MINISTER OF HEALTH NOR OTHER MINISTRIES ARE PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE VIGOROUS BIRTH CONTROL PROGRAMS WHICH MIGHT EVOKE OPPOSITION FROM THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY. THE MINISTER OF HEALTH HAS MADE STATEMENTS SUPPORTIVE OF FERTILITY REDUCTION, BUT THESE STATEMENTS ARE NOT BACKED BY EXHORTATION FOR SPECIFIC ACTION IN FAMILY PLANNING.

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ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP IS GENERALLY RETICENT ON THE SUBJECT, ALTHOUGH THERE IS FATWA (RELIGIOUS ADVISORY OPINION) BY THE SHEIKH OF AL-AZHAR SANCTIONING FAMILY PLANNING AS OPPOSED TO BIRTH CONTROL. THE ISLAMIC RATIONALE EMPLOYED IN THIS FATWA IS THAT FAMILY PLANNING IS PERMITTED IN TERMS OF PROTECTING THE MOTHER'S HEALTH BY INCREASING THE TIME BETWEEN HAVING ADDITIONAL BABIES. THE ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP FROWNS UPON THE USE OF SUCH DEVICES AS THE PILL AND OTHER CONTRACEPTIVE METHODS. SPORADIC NEWSPAPER ARTICLES QUOTE VARIOUS SHEIKHS' ATTITUDES TOWARD BIRTH CONTROL AND USUALLY PRESENT NEGATIVE REACTIONS. THESE ARTICLES USUALLY GO UNANSWERED.

(2) - COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: EXCEPT IN SPORADIC PILOT AREAS ASSISTED BY EXTERNAL DONORS, COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION HAS NOT BEEN STIMULATED ON A NATIONAL BASIS. WHERE THIS HAS BEEN DONE (MAHALLA EL KUBRA, SHANAWAN) RESULTS HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGING. THE IBRD AND AID CURRENTLY ARE DEVELOPING PROJECTS WHICH WILL FURTHER THIS PARTICIPATION.

(3) - RELATIONSHIP OF FAMILY PLANNING TO HEALTH DELIVERY SYSTEMS: THE FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM IS DELIVERED ALMOST ENTIRELY THROUGH MULTIPURPOSE HEALTH DELIVERY UNITS, AND IS FULLY INTEGRATED INTO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH'S DELIVERY SYSTEM.

(4) - DONOR ASSISTANCE: EGYPT CURRENTLY RECEIVES ASSISTANCE FROM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE IBRD, AID (INCLUDING IPPF, AVS, PATHFINDER), THE UNFPA AND OTHER AGENCIES OF THE UN, POPULATION COUNCIL, ETC. THE GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY NEGOTIATING WITH THE WEST GERMAN AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN FAMILY PLANNING. MOST ASSISTANCE IS CHanneled THROUGH THE POPULATION AND FAMILY PLANNING BOARD, BUT DONORS INCREASINGLY ARE RELUCTANT TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS THROUGH THE BOARD (E.G. IBRD AND AID PLAN TO SIGN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER GOE AGENCIES). WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT GAVE \$2.0 MILLION TO THE BOARD 7 YEARS AGO WHICH HAS NOT BEEN SPENT. TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE GOE HAS CHanneled ASSISTANCE EFFORTS INTO HARDWARE SUPPORT OF THE HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE, SUPPORT OF PROVIDER INCENTIVES, LOCAL CURRENCY SUPPORT FOR THE POPULATION AND FAMILY PLANNING BOARD, AND MATERIALS FOR CONTRACEPTIVES. THE GOE NEEDS MORE ASSISTANCE IN PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, LOGISTICS, DATA MANAGEMENT, TRAINING, COMMUNICATION AND SUPERVISION. DONORS ARE WORKING WITH THE GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP MORE POSITIVE GOE SUPPORT FOR AN ACTIVE FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM. AS THIS OCCURS, IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO

ALLOCATE INCREASED DONOR RESOURCES IN THIS AREA.

3. NON-POPULATION PROGRAMS. SOME PRELIMINARY DATA AVAILABLE FROM 1976 CENSUS SUGGEST SOME CHANGES IN CHARACTERISTICS WHICH SHOULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH DECREASING FERTILITY (URBANIZATION, INCREASED LITERACY, INCREASED FEMALE EMPLOYMENT):

A. THE URBAN PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION INCREASED FROM 40.5 PERCENT IN 1966 TO 43.9 PERCENT IN 1976.

B. THE PERCENT OF THE POPULATION UNDER 12 YEARS OF AGE DECREASED FROM 33.5 PERCENT IN 1960 TO 31.6 PERCENT IN 1976. (WE FEEL THIS REPORTED DECLINE IS QUESTIONABLE.)

C. THE PERCENT OF THE FEMALE POPULATION ENGAGED IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY INCREASED FROM 4.8 PERCENT IN 1960 TO 9.2 PERCENT IN 1976.

D. MALE ILLITERACY (10 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER) DROPPED FROM 56.9 LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PERCENT IN 1960 TO 43.2 PERCENT IN 1976. FEMALE ILLITERACY DROPPED FROM 84.0 PERCENT TO 71.0 PERCENT.

E. THE PERCENTAGE OF FEMALES OVER 15 CURRENTLY MARRIED DECREASED FROM 67.5 PERCENT TO 64.7 PERCENT.

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ALTHOUGH RURAL HEALTH PROGRAMS STRESS MCH CARE, WE HAVE NO AVAILABLE DATA WHICH WOULD SUGGEST THAT INFANT MORTALITY RATES (APPROXIMATELY 116/1000) HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED OVER THE PAST DECADE. A FORTHCOMING GOE MORBIDITY SURVEY MAY HELP DEVELOP BETTER DATA FOR ASSESSMENT. EDUCATION AND SOCIAL

SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE ARE WIDESPREAD IN BOTH URBAN AND RURAL AREAS, ALTHOUGH SERVICES DELIVERY ARE HAMPERED BY AN OVERLOADED AND SLOW-REACTING BUREAUCRACY. THE GOE HAS MADE A COMMITMENT TO EXTEND THESE SERVICES ON A QUITABLE BASIS ON AS WIDE A SCALE AS RESOURCES WILL PERMIT.

4. FOOD AND POPULATION. THE PROSPECTS FOR EXPENDING LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION ARE NOT GOOD. THERE WILL BE NO SIGNIFICANT HORIZONTAL LAND EXPANSION BETWEEN NOW AND 1980 AND ONLY MARGINAL EXPANSION OF PRODUCTION FROM EXISTING CULTIVATABLE LAND DUE TO CHANGES IN CROP ALLOCATIONS, NEW GROWING TECHNIQUES AND THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF WHEAT AND CORN. OUR BEST ESTIMATE FOR THE EXPANSION OF FOOD PRODUCTION IS ABOUT 2 PERCENT PER YEAR UP TO 1080. WITH POPULATION GROWTH OF ABOUT 2.5 PERCENT PER YEAR, THIS EXPANSION WILL BE MORE THAN CONSUMED BY THE EXPECTED NEW MOUTHS. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT BY 1985 CROP YIELDS COULD BE INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY IF THE APPROPRIATE DECISIONS REGARDING NEW TECHNIQUES, IRRIGATION AND CROP ALLOCATIONS ARE TAKEN. WATER RESOURCES FOR CURRENTLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CULTIVABLE LAND ARE NOT A PROBLEM FOR EGYPT; HOWEVER, OVER-IRRIGATION IS A PROBLEM AND IS THREATENING TO REDUCE PRODUCTIVITY IN SOME AREAS, ESPECIALLY UPPER EGYPT.

AS A RESULT OF THE EXPANDING POPULATION AND THE POOR OUTLOOK FOR INCREASED FOOD PRODUCTION, DEPENDENCE ON FOOD IMPORTS WILL DEFINITELY INCREASE. THE PRINCIPAL IMPORTS ARE WHEAT AND EDIBLE FATS AND OILS. WHEAT IMPORTS ARE EXPECTED TO RISE FROM 3.5 MILLION TONS IN 1974 AND 4.5 MILLION TONS IN 1980. CONSUMPTION OF EDIBLE OILS ARE PROJECTED TO RISE FROM 306,000 TONS IN 1976 TO 435,000 TONS IN 1977; ALL OF THE INCREASE WILL HAVE TO BE IMPORTED.

FINANCING OF THE INCREASING FOOD IMPORT BILL IS A CONTINUING PROBLEM. EGYPT IS INCAPABLE OF CONTINUING HIGH LEVEL OF IMPORTED FOOD COSTS IN SHORT TERM (MOSTLY WHEAT AND OILS AND FATS) WITHOUT CONCESSIONARY FINANCING. IT CAN ALSO BE ARGUED THAT EGYPT SHOULD SHIFT ITS CROP ALLOCATION IN FAVOR OF HIGHER VALUED CROPS FOR EXPORT. THIS WOULD NECESSARILY MEAN A SHIFT AWAY FROM GRAIN PRODUCTION WHICH WOULD RESULT IN HIGHER IMPORT NEEDS FOR GRAIN. THIS INCREASE IN IMPORTS WOULD, IN SUCH CONTEXT, BE DESIRABLE. INCREASED EXPORT PROCEEDS MIGHT HELP MEET FOOD IMPORT COSTS BY 1985. IN THIS CONNECTION THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD REVIEW THE PROJECT PAPER ON THE SILOS PROJECT AND THE JUSTIFICATION DOCUMENTS FOR THE FY 78 PL 480 PROGRAM FOR FURTHER BACKGROUND.

CURRENT HANDLING CAPACITY FOR WHEAT IS BARELY ADEQUATE TO KEEP PACE WITH IMPORTS. THERE ARE ONLY TWO BULK STORAGE

FACILITIES IN EGYPT; ONE AT ALEXANDRIA (48,000 TONS) AND THE OTHER IN CAIRO (58,000 TONS). ABOUT 90 PERCENT OF CURRENT GRAIN IMPORTS COME THROUGH ALEXANDRIA AND BECAUSE BULK STORAGE FACILITY THERE CAN ONLY HANDLE ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF TOTAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IMPORTS, ALMOST 70 PERCENT OF THE IMPORTED WHEAT IS BAGGED BY HAND AND STORED IN THE OPEN AIR. AN AID PROJECT, SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN 1981, WILL ADD 100,000 TON CAPACITY UNITS IN BOTH ALEXANDRIA AND CAIRO. TOTAL OIL AND FAT STORAGE IS ONLY 26,000 TONS.

THE BIGGEST BOTTLENECK IN TERMS OF FOOD IMPORTS IS PORT CONGESTION. AT ALEXANDRIA, WHERE CAPACITY FOR UNLOADING WHEAT FROM CARRIERS IS 14,000 TONS PER DAY, CURRENT UNLOADING IS AVERAGING ONLY ABOUT 7,000 TONS PER DAY BECAUSE OF VOER- CONGESTION IN THE PORT AREA. ANOTHER PROBLEM IS THE LACK OF ADEQUATE INLAND TRANSPORTATION. AID IS PROCURING TRUCKS UNDER THE CIP PROGRAM WHICH WILL HELP TO EASE THIS SITUATION, BUT THE PROBLEM WILL STILL EXIST. IN 1975, THE EGYPTIAN ARMY HAD TO BE CALLED OUT TO HELP MOVE A PILE-UP AT THE PORT WHICH OCCURRED FROM MUSHROOMING IMPORTS; IT COULD BE REQUIRED TO DO SO AGAIN IF THE PROBLEM REOCCURS.

IN PORT SAID A NEW CONVEYER UNLOADING FACILITY RECENTLY LEASED TO THE GOE BY AN AMERICAN FIRM IS HELPING TO INCREASE UNLOADING CAPACITY THERE. THE PROBLEM OF INLAND TRANSPORTATION AND STOREAGE IS, HOWEVER, ACUTE. AID PROJECTS FOR FY 78 AND 79 ARE CURRENTLY PLANNED TO CONTAIN STORAGE FACILITIES FOR OTHER POPULATION CENTERS AROUND EGYPT.

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